1935

Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

What a heap of consolation we may derive from the knowledge that, though we dare to be a Daniel, it is not necessary to be a De Leon.

"If you see it in the 'Sun,' it's so. This applies to advertisements as well as to news." How delicately thus is the editorial department, which is neither of advertisement (?) nor of news, made exempt from truthfulness!

Governor Waite, in his message to the Colorado legislature, suggests as a substitute for capital punishment "that the most hardened criminals be compelled to run as candidates for some State office." The governor speaks feelingly, but not reasonably. The penalty proposed would not be felt by the criminal as a punishment. Candidacy for office brings disgrace and suffering only upon the honest man.

The editor of the "Twentieth Century" is endorsing Frances E. Willard's suggestion to unite the forces of the Prohibition and People's parties. Two such reactionary movements should certainly unite in the bonds of holy matrimony. The proposition is mainly interesting, however, as showing the calibre of the neo-State Socialists, and as indicating what may be expected from paternalism. The State Socialists have been wont to declare that, as soon as men are sufficiently advanced to advocate their ideas, they will be too liberal to wish to direct each other's private affairs. This looks like it, doesn't it?

A professor of political economy in one of the leading American universities, who is himself neither a State Socialist nor an Anarchist, but something of both, told me the other day that, desiring to ascertain whether the unprejudiced mind tended the more naturally to authoritarian or libertarian solutions of economic problems, he once placed in the hands of a class which had received from him no economic bias my essay on "State Socialism and Anarchism," and had found, as a result, that, judging from this experiment alone, nearly every unprejudiced mind, on being confronted with the two theories, naturally turns to the Anarchistic view. "It was one of the most interesting facts," he added, "that ever came under my observation."

The New York "Sun," in its editorial review of the year 1894, pretending to great anxiety regarding the welfare of France, declares that it has "deplored the failure to purge the legislature of every person incriminated by the Panama exposure, and to expel from the Legion of Honor the men whose names are synonyms for fraud," and that it "regrets to see a disposition on the part of many deputies to begin the same campaign of personal vindictiveness against their present chief magistrate which was successfully pursued against President Grévy." This poor ignorant "Sun" is evidently unaware that the campaign of vindictiveness against Casimir-Perier is based mainly on the fact that he retains as his intimates and advisers many of the men who were smirched by the Panama exposure, and that the campaign against Grévy grew out of the commercial traffic in the decorations of the Legion of Honor carried on by his son-in-law, Wilson. It would be difficult for a journal to make a greater ass of itself than by placing in juxtaposition two such sentences as those quoted.

"Humbuggery is very conspicuous at the gatherings of particular classes when the eminent are invited to orate. For instance, at a Catholic reunion some humbug or other, who is not a Catholic, and knows nothing of the Catholic religion, arises to speak. He dwells with fatuous adulation upon the greatness of the Catholic church in America. A week later that same humbug will say the same thing to an assemblage of Protestants. Chauncey M. Depew has done this very thing regularly for the past five years. Of course the man is not alone in this development of contemporary humbuggery. Eminent men address organizations diametrically in opposition to each other in terms of equal praise. To some people this seems liberality. It is nothing of the sort. It is a demagogic humbuggery from men who try to keep on the right side of everybody." Where do you suppose I found these words, dear reader? In the editorial columns of the "Twentieth Century." It is a perfect characterization of that journal's own policy toward schools of reform diametrically opposite in principles and methods.

A correspondent of the New York "Sun," writing over the signature of "Low Rate," asks: "Why don't the express companies make a parcel rate for all packages of five pounds or less at, say, twenty-five cents the parcel to all points within a radius of a thousand miles from the office from which the parcel may be sent? I am moved to this inquiry by the fact that not long ago I had occasion to send a parcel weighing fifty-two ounces to a point six hundred miles to the west. The charge was fifty cents, or two cents less than letter postage, which for ordinary distances is supposed to be the very highest rate of transportation. The parcel being a book, mailable at one cent for two ounces, I took it to the post office, thus putting twenty-six cents in the pocket of Uncle Sam, keeping twenty-four cents in my own pocket, and preventing fifty cents from getting into the pocket of the express company." If this shrewd individual keeps on, he will die in the poor-house. If he had told the express company (as he had to tell the postal clerk) that his parcel contained only a book, the company would have carried it for him to any part of the United States or Canada for twenty-four cents, which is two cents less than the amount he paid to Uncle Sam for the service. Moreover, "Low Rate" is very poor at figures. He thinks that his book, weighing fifty-two ounces, could have gone through the mails as a sealed letter for fifty-two cents. On the contrary, the charge would have been just double that sum.

It is a great pity that no millionaire is likely to have sufficient wisdom to act upon the hint thrown out by Herbert Spencer in the article which I reprint from the London "Times." But if the unexpected should happen (as it often does) and the important work of tabulating statutes and their effects should in consequence be undertaken, the task, so far as the present day is concerned, would be greatly facilitated by the "Beauties of Government" compiled in every number of Liberty. It has often occurred to me that it would be a very useful, though very costly, method of propagandism to keep a thorough and systematic search of the world's press continually in progress in order to gather, classify, and publish, say, in quarterly volumes, facts such as those which I now secure by chance and print in confusion. The sale of such volumes would be small, but it would be difficult to over-estimate their permanent utility. By the way, when I began the department of "Beauties," one or two readers of Liberty, after examining the first instalment, expressed the opinion that I must have been collecting the items for a long time, and that I would find it impossible to obtain sufficient matter of this nature to fill two pages of each number of the paper. Good Anarchists as these gentlemen were, they had formed no adequate conception of the enormity of the mass of governmental folly. Though I make no special search, I always have more items in my possession than I can find room for. Let not this deter any one from sending me all the items that he meets. Indeed, I wish that my comrades would coöperate with me in this matter to a greater extent than they do. The larger the collection of items, the more effective the selection that can be made therefrom.

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"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Is Stead an Anarchist?

All State institutions breed abuses as carcasses breed maggots. — *Stead, "If Christ Came to Chicago," p. 168.*

The City Council is the machinery through which the Kingdom of God should be set up in Chicago. — *Stead, "If Christ Came to Chicago," p. 183.*

If both these statements are true, — and almost any part of Mr. Stead's book may be regarded as expansion and reaffirmation of one or the other, — then, according to the usual way of looking at things, the prospects of the Kingdom of God in Chicago are very blue. Ordinary logic shows no way of getting a Kingdom of God that will not have a constant tendency to breed maggots, except for the City Council to cease being a State institution. Does Mr. Stead recognize this as a possibility, and is he willing to work toward this way of getting out of the trouble? If not, why not?

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

A Quack's Dilemma.

It is perhaps excusable to devote a little space occasionally to exposure of a quack, in order to prevent in some small degree a spread of the mischief. This is the only reason why J. Erickson's article in the September "Arena," which gives an alleged astrological forecast of Cleveland's administration, is worthy of any notice.

In an editorial note appended to the article, Mr. Flower explains that the manuscript was received by him in March, 1893. He refrained from printing it, however, till events had borne out the author's predictions. This is a trick worthy of the "Arena." How many such prophecies have you received, Mr. Flower, which you have not published because they were not fulfilled?

After all, there is nothing extraordinary in this fulfilment, when we consider that all the prophecies simply amount to this, — that the Democratic party will violate its pre-election pledges, and that Cleveland will play autocrat. Many Anarchists said the same thing, and even the editor of the "Arena" admits that personally he "believed the predictions would be substantially verified, although," he says, "I arrived at my conclusions from entirely different premises to those on which Mr. Erickson based his opinions. . . . I felt that, if the published statements were true, Mr. Cleveland had come so completely under the Wall street and monopolistic influences that he would . . . prove as subservient to corporate interests as had the party of the opposition."

Were not the sources of information here alluded to open to Mr. Erickson? The law of parsimony tells us that, when two explanations of a phenomenon are offered, we must accept the simplest and most natural. So we must repudiate astrology and rely upon common sense as the source of these prophecies. That is, if a prophet with common sense is not more marvelous than astrology. It was unkind of Mr. Flower to place his contributor in this dilemma. It is a little strange that our prophet failed to foretell the result of the elections just passed. But a trivial omission like this should not cast discredit upon his horoscope.

In conclusion, he says: "I am open to conviction of the falsity of the art, but my critics must furnish absolute proofs, based on demonstrable elements of fact." No, sir. The burden of proof rests with you, and, until you can furnish "absolute proofs, based on demonstrable elements of fact," we will insist that you are a quack; and any attempt to shift the responsibility of proof will be considered as evidence of sneaking cowardice. F. D. T.

Political Action.

The rise and fall of Populism in Colorado is very instructive to those who believe in the political method. The first convention of the party in Colorado was held in the fall of 1890. Most of the delegates present were well known locally among reformers. The silver question was being agitated in the newspapers for political reasons, and much prejudice on the subject had already been stirred up. In order to cater to this feeling, a silver plank was tacked on to the platform of the new party, as a sop to popular prejudice. It was mainly due to this plank that political success was achieved in 1892. The newspapers had howled sixteen to one so loudly and so assiduously that the people thought there was something in it. When the two old parties neglected the silver question, very many voters bolted to the People's party. This naturally forced the other questions into the background. As soon as political success seemed possible, to catch votes became the great duty of the party. Political blacklegs and disappointed Democrats, attracted by scent of spoil, went over with a run. The new party dared not refuse this alliance, and so the tail began to wag the dog. The success of the party in 1892 made matters worse. Many of Waite's actions disgusted his conservative constituents, and so it was absolutely essential to secure a new crop at all hazards. With this end in view, one of the most disreputable of the Republican politicians was bought over. Waite's renomination was secured only after a bitter fight by the more radical element. But this counted for little, as the entire campaign was managed by the new adherents. It is thus that political action corrupts. One of the most prominent members of the party admitted to me that, had the party been successful, it would have caused the death of "reform" in Colorado. The new element would have had it all their own way. Defeat, crushing defeat, was all that could purge the party of its political parasites.

This is ever the result of the political method. As long as the movement is unsuccessful, the energy expended is wasted, and success can only be purchased at the expense of principle and reform. F. D. T.

Mr. Byington's Puzzle Department.

To the Editor of Liberty:

I suppose I did strain probability in assuming, in my letter in No. 302, that in my second mine the law of increasing returns would be exhausted by one man's work, and the law of diminishing returns would begin to work with the second man. But it seems to me that this is one of the points in which, as I said, the probability or improbability of my figures makes no difference with the soundness of my argument.

Suppose the *per capita* production of the second mine increases with the increase in number of workmen till the 100th man, and at that point is $900. Then, when 210 workmen are on hand, there will be 110 in the first mine, as I had it before, and 100 in the second, producing $900 each. Will not all my deductions follow as well as in the case I described in my previous letter? (1)

Your second and third points against me are that wages will be kept up by competition with other mines and other industries. I think I recognized the effect of competition when I assumed that the laborers were paid as much as they were worth to their employers. (2) The wages I named in each case were such that it would pay better to discharge the man than to employ him at a higher rate; and no possible competition can make employers pay more than that.

I outraged probability again, I think, in assuming that the conditions I named could come to pass without a rise in the price of coal. Such a rise might keep wages up, so that we need not assume a general fall in wages throughout the region; but it would raise the employers' profits so as not to decrease the inequality. Therefore the point of my argument is not affected. The introduction of labor-saving machinery, too, might increase the amount of wages, or might decrease them; but it could not diminish the inequality unless it increased the number of workmen needed to get the maximum *per capita* product, and not certainly even then. (3)

Your fourth point is that "a fair interpretation of the terms occupancy and use" would probably not give 100 men a monopoly of that mine. I do not profess to know how to interpret those terms: on the contrary, my foremost complaint against your principle is that I cannot understand how much you make those terms cover. But the nearest that I ever came to getting a comprehensible definition from an "occupancy and use" advocate was in your answer to me summer before last, when I understood that the presence of any improvements of tangible value, or the making of any use, however slight, was enough to hold the land, unless the principle of liberty was to be suspended on the ground of necessity, which seemed to be your way of expressing the right of eminent domain. If this understanding is right, then I am sure the original workers will have improvements enough to hold their mine, and the farmers of the neighborhood, under whose land mines may lie, will hold the land by their farming use, and, of course, will not sell it for much less than its mining value, because they will hope to get that price from some one sometime. The only spots that will be free in a tolerably well settled country will be rocks so bare that they cannot be of any use even for pasturage. The mines that could be opened on such rocks would be limited in number, and, if the number at first seemed great, the needs of a civilization like ours would soon make the pressure of the limits felt. The way to mining monopoly cannot then, as it seems to me, be blocked by the occupancy-and-use law. You would not, I suppose, use the power of eminent domain, *alias* "necessity," to take land for opening a mine; I do not know but you might use it to give a

right of way across the cultivated field to the bare rock where a mine was to be opened. (4)

Fifth, you say, "Mining is but one, and the smallest, of the four great classes of labor, and the others are not relieved in the same degree from the equalizing influence of competition." Not so. Of the five great classes of labor, — agriculture, manufactures, commerce, mining, and personal service (including housekeeping), — mining is indeed the smallest, but it is also that in which land monopoly has least hold, with the possible exception of agriculture. The proof of this is in the amount of land value, which measures the effect of land monopoly. The value of mining land in the United States is a mere bagatelle beside the value of city land. (5) That is to say, the pressure of the need for special spots for mining is small compared to the pressure of the need for special spots for manufactures, commerce, and personal service. And take notice that city land is precisely that land which will never be freed at all by your system; for you said distinctly that the cultivation of a potato patch would be use enough to secure the tenure of a city corner-lot. But no city land will ever be found without so much use, if that is necessary to hold the tenure; therefore no city land will be free under your system. (6)

You end in italics, "*Equality if we can get it, but Liberty at any rate!*" All right. But I propose to get liberty by getting rid of eminent domain (7) and some other things which the occupancy-and-use theory seems to me to involve. My position two years ago was that the occupant of land, however good his faith, is an invader of equal liberty as against any man who wants the land and does not consent to his occupancy. When our discussion was broken off by Liberty's suspension, it had reduced itself to a discussion of the illustrative question whether the man who blocks up a narrow passage with his body invades the equal liberty of those who wish to pass through, which I affirmed and you denied. I have since noticed that one year earlier, in an answer to Mr. Robinson ("Instead of a Book," p. 77), you wrote: "If the invader, instead of chaining me to a post, barricades the highway, do I any the less lose my liberty of locomotion?" I should like to know how to reconcile your answer to me and your answer to Mr. Robinson. (8) I should also like to know whether, if some one builds a cage over me while I am asleep on the grass, he invades my equal liberty. If so, how does the case differ in principle from that of the man who plants himself in a passage-way? I should think your logic would require you to answer that he does not invade, but that necessity justifies me in invading his equal liberty by breaking through the cage, if I am strong enough. (9)

I will become an advocate of the occupancy-and-use doctrine as soon as I see that it offers more liberty than the Single Tax; but hitherto it seems to me that those State Socialists who hold your view are quite within the logic of their principle. In "Instead of a Book," pp. 311–12, you suggest the limitation of area of ownership, with exceptions wherever a court of equity may think the letter of the law conflicts with its spirit, as a possible way of applying your principle. It is a proposal usually found in State Socialist company. (10)

STEPHEN T. BYINGTON.

(1) In either case Mr. Byington's figures have force as against the position that there is no such thing as economic rent. But, as against the position that under freedom there are important influences at work to lessen economic rent, his second case is much weaker than his first, for the reason that the hypothetical figures in the second case are much less probable than in the first. In other words, by compelling him to recognize the law of increasing returns in both mines instead of in one alone, I at the same time compel him to assume, in order to overcome the tendency of this law toward equality, a far greater and more improbable inferiority in the quality of the second mine than he attributed to that mine in his first hypothesis. And, as these sudden drops in quality are not, as a general thing, typical of the actual fact, Mr. Byington's new figures greatly weaken his argument. This error of exaggeration is, in my judgment, a prevalent one among Single Taxers, and accounts to a great extent for their delusion. They see their subject on one side only, upon which they throw a blinding light that gives enormous emphasis to everything within its rays and obscures all the other aspects upon which its rays do not fall. If I may illustrate by exaggerating their exaggeration, I will say that I hardly ever saw a Single Taxer to whom the world was not fairly typified by two coal mines, one yielding the best anthracite so readily that the miner need only stand at the shaft and whistle for it, and the other yielding nothing but lignite to the most arduous labor and with great reluctance. The answer to the Single Taxer is that we don't live in that sort of a world.

(2) It is not altogether a question of how much these laborers are worth to employers engaged in coal-mining. Their worth to employers in other lines must be taken into account. Under freedom, when the availability of capital will furnish new avenues for labor, Mr. Byington's 111th man who goes to work in the second mine for $900 instead of accepting offers of $1000 from men in other lines of business will be a fool who deserves his fate.

(3) But, says Mr. Byington, the demand for coal finally making it worth while to pay the 111th man $1000 to go to work in the second mine, this demand and consequent rise in price will correspondingly increase the reward of the operators of the first mine, and the inequality will be as great as ever. Which means, at the worst, that, while none are paid any less than formerly, some are paid more. Dreadful thing! As Mr. Donisthorpe has pointed out in a way that evidently appeals with force to my Christian friend, Mr. Byington, the accidental benefiting of another is, "in the present state of Christian fraternity, a consummation to be carefully shunned."

(4) Whether the neighboring farmers should sink shafts themselves or part with their land to others wishing to do so, in either case these would be an introduction of a new competitive factor tending toward equality. The article to which Mr. Byington now replies was one calling his attention to factors in the rent problem which he seemed to neglect. The liability of access to the first coal vein through a new shaft was one of these factors, and Mr. Byington's answer does not get rid of it. His nearest approach to it is a suggestion of the Malthusian argument, to which I can only respond that, if Malthusianism be true, it militates as strongly against the Single Tax as against any other reformatory proposal. I may add — though this matter is not strictly pertinent to the present discussion, but an engrafting upon it of an old discussion — that I would not, under any ordinary circumstances, oust an occupant and user to get either mining land or a right of way thereto. But I can conceive of circumstances, not only in the relations of men to the land, but in the relations of men to each other, where I would, for the moment, trample ruthlessly upon all the principles by which successful society must as a general thing be guided. I would advise Mr. Byington to consider for a while whether he himself is superior to necessity, before too confidently assuming that there is any single rule to which he can *always* conform his conduct, and hinting a mild scorn for those less confident than he. If he wishes to debate this point, he will find that I too am "no slouch" at propounding puzzles. But here I must again remind him that extreme cases are not typical, and that the course which we might follow in a great emergency is not a factor to be considered in deciding upon a course to be pursued in every-day life.

(5) The value of land under the present system of land tenure has no bearing whatever on my assertion that under freedom the equalizing influence of competition is felt less in mining than in other branches of labor. If A has a mine in which his day's labor will yield him ten per cent. more coal than B's day's labor will yield B in another mine, A will derive ten per cent. more from the sale of his coal than B will derive from the sale of his, because all the coal, assuming it to be of equal quality, will bring the same price per ton, so far as the mine-owner is concerned. But commercial competition in cities is a different matter. In the lower and busy section of New York city there are perhaps a hundred drug-stores occupying sites which may vary slightly in suitability for the drug trade, but all of which are excellent. In the upper parts of the city there are other drug-stores, most of which occupy vastly inferior sites. There is always a stiff competition in progress between the down-town druggists, but, in spite of this, the high rents which they have to pay prevent them from putting their prices much below the prices prevailing up town. Now, if the present system of land tenure should be changed to one of occupancy and use, what would happen? Why, the down-town druggists, relieved of the burden of rent, would lower their prices in competition with each other until all or nearly all the rent which they now pay to landlords would be flowing into the pockets of their customers. The profits of the down-town druggist doing a large business at low prices could be little or no more than normal wages, and those of the up-town druggist doing a small business at high prices could be little or no less. In this typical commercial example competition under freedom shows a strong tendency to take from the occupants of superior sites their advantage. The occupants of inferior commercial sites can in most cases obtain for their goods prices proportionately higher, but the owner of a mine yielding an inferior quantity of coal can get no more per ton for his product than can his more fortunate rivals. This is the difference that I pointed out to Mr. Byington, and his remark regarding the present value of city land is no answer.

(6) Certainly no land, except the very poorest, will be free under the Single Tax, for every occupant of land that is good for anything will have to pay tribute to the State. Evidently free land is one thing to Mr. Byington and another thing to me. I consider a potato patch whose cultivator pays no rent free land, even though it be a city corner-lot; and I should consider the same piece of land not free, but monopolized, if it were occupied by a confectioner obliged to pay tribute either to an individual or to the State.

(7) I know of no domain that occupies a higher eminence than that occupied by the domain which says to every user of land: "Hand over to me all that your land yields you over and above what the most barren of wastes yields to your most unfortunate fellowman, or else I will throw you neck and heels into the street." The "eminent domain" that I believe in, if Mr. Byington insists on so denominating it, would assume no rights in any land whatsoever, but would simply decline to protect the dominion of any one over land which he was not using.

(8) To block up a narrow passage not regularly occupied and used for purposes of travel is one thing; to barricade an improved, claimed, and constantly used highway is another thing. Admission of the former requires no reconciliation with denial of the latter.

(9) This is another of those impossible nuts which Mr. Byington finds himself unable to crack. I remember that, among the riddles of intricate relationship with which some people are fond of perplexing other people, there is one in which a boy makes wildly extravagant claims regarding his family connections, and that, after due deliberation, the explanation is found in the fact that the boy lied. Now, "the boy lied" is the proper solution of this cage puzzle. It is true that, in a metaphorical, and yet very real, but not a literal, sense, legislators, clergymen, economists, doctors, bankers, landlords, and various other orders of charlatans and tyrants spend their lives in building cages over other people who are asleep; but these cages are a good deal like the chalk-marks which, to a hen, are prison walls, and they lose their substance as soon as the prisoners wake. Literally speaking, however, people are not in the habit of building cages over other people when they are asleep. And even were I to be convinced that the thing has happened, and may yet happen two or three times more, I could not become a Single Taxer on that account, though the occupancy-and-use theory should prove unable to settle this particular difficulty without violation of equal liberty. Still, I desire to gratify Mr. Byington as far as possible, and therefore make further answer as follows. If a man goes to sleep upon his own land and another enters and builds a cage over him, the trespasser invades; the cage may rightfully be torn down, and the builder may be punished. The same is true of a man who builds a cage over a tramp asleep upon the highway. If a tramp goes to sleep upon another's land, and if the owner, without waking him, builds a cage over him, the fact is, in my judgment, presumptive evidence of the owner's malicious intent to use his land for invasive purposes; and for this reason the neighbors would be justified in letting the tramp out and putting the cage-builder in. There would be the same presumption and the same guilt, though no neighbors to do justice, if Robinson Crusoe, cast upon an island and finding Friday (the sole resident) asleep, should build a cage over him. These are all the hypothetical cases of cage-building that occur to me at present. They differ from the case of the man who plants himself in a passage-way, in that he thereby (if I understand the hypothesis) simply takes up vacant land and becomes an occupant thereof in good faith for ordinary and legitimate purposes, and not with a view to unnecessarily and maliciously embarrassing and crippling others. But, though the intent were not malicious, if the result were not merely inconvenience for others but imprisonment as complete as that of the man within the cage, I should regard the emergency as sufficiently critical to warrant a violation of principle. Not for gods, devils, society, men, or principles would I allow myself to be imprisoned, completely crippled, and virtually killed, if I could in any way avoid it. But I would suffer a great deal of embarrassment in order to avoid the violation of a principle the general observance of which I consider essential to the closest possible approximation to that social harmony which I deem of high value to myself.

(10) Mr. Byington's writing generally has the great merit of lucidity, but what this paragraph means I don't know. I suspect that it is another puzzle. In any case, his closing remark is a very rash one. The Single Taxer who accuses Anarchists of training in State Socialistic company forgets that the Single Taxers are dwellers in a house built of excessively fragile glass. As a body they are hand-and-glove with and controlled by State Socialists, Populists, and Nationalists the country over, despite the efforts of a little band of them who really have a preference for greater liberty. The cardinal doctrine of State Socialism is State ownership of the means of production. Now, no man who believes in that believes or can logically believe in an occupancy-and-use title. But very many men who believe in that accept and endorse (at least temporarily) the Single Tax, regarding it (and with much reason) as another form of pretty nearly the same thing so far as land is concerned. I am much pleased to learn from Mr. Byington that the State Socialists agree with the Anarchists in favoring the abolition of written law, and the decision of disputes by the unanimous verdict of juries applying to each case as it arises their own conceptions of justice instead of rigid statutes and mandatory court rulings. If he will give me some evidence in proof of this, my pleasure will be still greater.

T.

Interest is Just.

To the Editor of Liberty:

Mr. Bilgram, writing in Liberty of November 17, 1894, proposes a question where in two separate cases an owner deprives himself for a year of the gratification he might have obtained from the use of a horse, but in only one of which cases he is paid for the privation; and he asks why, if interest is a payment for privation, this should be so. The difference between the two cases is that in the case when interest is paid to the owner of the horse he is supposed to lend it upon the stipulation that he is to be paid a sum consisting of two components, — (*a*) a recompense for the deterioration of the horse in a year, and (*b*) the interest at five per cent. on the value of the horse; while in the other case he is supposed to sell the horse at the beginning of the year for bank-notes for which he has no present use and which he keeps in his hands during the whole year, when, upon the expiration of the year, he buys back the horse at its reduced value, so that he retains only a recompense for the decrease in the value of the animal, but no payment as interest for the surrender by him of those services and utilities which the horse might have rendered him had it remained in his own possession. The most evident answer to the question why the owner does not obtain any interest in this second case is that the horse is owned by a donkey! (1) Even farmers do not usually buy money for which they have no use. The object which a farmer has in buying money (or credit more marketable than their own, — namely, bank-notes) is that they may be in a position to sell the money (or credit) to better advantage. If for a year, or two, or ten, no opportunity occurs of advantageously selling, or, as it is called, investing, the money, then this only proves that it was unwisely bought, and that the farmer could not read the future when he bought the money with his horse. It is painful to witness the obscurity of mind which can overlook or ignore the absurdity of the assumption that money can reasonably be held month after month (why not year after year?) unprofitable when it could be transformed by exchange into a necessarily and originally implied useful horse; and it is equally or more lamentable to observe the contemptuous self-satisfaction of the editor of Liberty in regarding such a question capable of taxing anybody's mental energies. The question is based upon a transparent error, — that of supposing it likely or usual for money to be purposelessly bought. The fact that the mass of the people hold a great aggregate mass of money (and of one another's credit) perpetually unemployed can be seen to be but the integration of the universal custom of each to transform by exchange a portion of his wealth into the most saleable stock in trade in order to be prepared to sell it to the greatest advantage at some later moment and possibly at some other place. The money may be bought with a specific or a less definite object, but the general purpose is to hold such a value as by its cognizability and divisibility can in all ordinary circumstances be sold to the greatest advantage.

There is no determinable normal rate of interest or abnormal plentifulness or scarcity of capital. During recent years capital has constantly been increasing in its aggregate amount. By its competition its last increment is less and less productive. A large number of factories are idle because it is not evident to owners of capital that the operation of these vacant factories would result in gain to themselves. (2)

Under competition the value of any commodity is the quantity of some other commodity received in exchange for it, so that the discomfort expected to be endured by the surrender of the first commodity by its owner is not greater, and is somewhat less, than the discomfort expected to be suffered by abstaining from obtaining the other commodity; while at the same time the discomfort to the owner of the second commodity is not increased, but is somewhat decreased, by the exchange. Mr. Bilgram's statement that exchange under competition equates utility and disutility is defective and even false. It would be as true to assert that a scales equates a tendency of one end of the beam to rise with the tendency of the other end of the beam to fall. Economics consists of an equation of like qualities, — that is to say, either of comfort or of discomfort. It was well described by Jevons as a calculus of pleasure or pain.

The owner of a horse has to surrender the value of attention, feed, risk, and loss by ageing (why not aging?*), and obtains in exchange the value of the utility of the horse. He would not continue to make this exchange, unless the utility of the horse to him somewhat exceeded the utility of what he expends. It is this excess of the utility of the horse over the utility of the commodities expended which forms the motive to procure the horse either by production, purchase, or borrowing, and this excess is economic interest. A value somewhat less than this is the current interest determined by competition. (3)

A banker who is allowed by government to issue bank-notes may be unable to force as many into circulation as he is authorized to do. This may result from a want of public confidence in him, or from an inability of the exchanges to employ all the notes seeking circulation in addition to all the checks and other credits offering for sale. Credit is not wealth, and can therefore not be money. Interest is paid, not for credit, but for commodities, of which money is one. Borrowers of promises do not pay interest upon the promises, but upon the commodities they buy with these promises. (4) If the borrower of promises buys boots, or iron, or gold, or coins (which he can demand from the promiser if he chooses), and if he buy these as a mere trader seeking to sell them again, he must

* Mr. Fisher's orthographical point is well taken, and will be heeded. — EDITOR LIBERTY.

still more or less pay interest to the virtual lenders of the boots or gold, whether he succeeds in selling at the expected or any profit, or whether he loses by the speculation. Upon the average the holders of commodities, including money, do obtain a profit in wealth or some increase of convenience by merely buying the gold or other goods and reselling them. Hence it is that even "barren metal," as it has been called, yields a profit to the holder in marginal circumstances. When the holding or buying of gold ceases to be profitable, the holder sells or abstains from buying. The last increment of the circulation is that which merely recoups the holders at a rate equivalent to the current rate of interest which they could obtain by investing it in some other productive operation, instead of holding it for exchange and redistribution. When any portion of the circulation does not yield a convenience to the holders equal to the current rate of interest, then this portion of the currency is driven from circulation, and currency shrinks. The reason why a farmer loses interest by holding notes is not because he abstains from utilizing wealth, but because he gratuitously allows the banker to have the interest. (5) Bankers who create a credit so sound that it is a greater convenience to handle than gold or other commodities are given this interest by the circulators of their notes in exchange for the convenience.

A banker or a private person, either under government or under Anarchy, who can induce people gratuitously to lend him money by circulating his notes or checks is entitled to the interest which he is allowed by these people to earn upon the loans they make voluntarily and in exchange for a valuable consideration.

The holder of bank notes has delivered wealth, not to society, as Mr. Bilgram declares, but to the banker. (6) Interest is due to the productivity and scarcity of capital, because marginal productivity depends upon that of the last increment and therefore upon the relative scarcity. At the same time it is a payment for privation and a reward of abstinence because the last increment of capital depends upon abstinence and any lending is a privation to the lender, — in marginal cases (which regulate the whole). In some cases it is paid to the lender of superior credit, but it is actually paid upon capital consisting of commodities. These theories are not used alternately. They are mutually explanatory and supplementary. Of course, if Mr. Bilgram fails to understand such comparatively elementary matters, he will find great difficulty in carrying on a controversy upon currency. His "tactics" consist in coming up smiling with the same exploded illustrations again and again. Certain Anarchists may not believe that the laborer wishes or needs to buy back his product; but, when these Anarchists say that his wages ought to be sufficient to do this, they logically imply the absurdity they disclaim. When a person has bought a pair of boots which he wants, the price will not buy them back; it is insufficient to do so. The transaction of the whole of the world's business must employ as many three cent pieces as can profitably be carried by the population for resale.

Modern thought upon economics includes bimetallism, mutual-bankism, and other recussitated* antiquities.

Mr. Bilgram makes no attempt to show that, in the absence of the monetary custom, but subject to the depressing influence of abundant wealth, interest would be high. In exchange by barter a quantity of wealth greater than that now locked up in money would be required for the function of exchange or circulation; but, supposing wealth superabundant, interest could not be high. In the problem of interest the aging of the lender has an influence which Mr. Bilgram persists in ignoring. When one goes a year without a horse, he can never live that year over again or recover the convenience he has lost. Mr. Bilgram also overlooks the factitious value attached to bank-notes owing to their being by statute placed upon a spurious altitude. Under freedom they would be mere checks.

J. Greevz Fisher.

Chapel Allerton, November 26, 1894.

Rejoinder.

(1) Mr. Fisher has obviously entered, heart and soul, into the spirit of my question, in which F represented those among whom the notes are circulating, S the borrowers, and B the banking and note-issuing fraternity. F being the prototype of the people among whom the notes are circulating, those who accept bank-notes for their produce and keep them for a month, a week, a day, or an hour, are partners in the farmer's donkeyship. He seems to comprehend at last that outside of the money lending fraternity there are no men who are not donkeys.

(2) Why not attribute to those who keep idle their actual and real capital the quality attributed to the farmer for keeping mere promises unused?

(3) I am glad to learn that of two things of equal value the marginal utility of each exceeds that of the other, and that these reciprocal excesses constitute interest.

(4) In this country it is the man who has furnished the promises, — the banker, — and not the man who has furnished commodities in exchange for promises, — the holder of bank notes, — who gets the interest. I was not aware that the reverse is the case in England. Beg pardon for my ignorance.

(5) Perfectly true. The people, who in my illustration were represented by the farmer whom Mr. Fisher considers a donkey, acquiesce in the laws which enable the money-issuers and money-lenders to rob them right and left.

(6) I presume this accounts for the fact that in England the bankers pay interest to the holders of their bank notes.

Hugo Bilgram.

* Why not resuscitated? Or is this a pun? — Editor Liberty.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, Stephen T. Byington, 38 Council Hall, Oberlin, Ohio.

To the man who does not join the A. L. W. C. for fear his neighbors will find out that he is an Anarchist.

Dear Sir, — I sympathize with you. I have been there myself. In fact, I am there now to a certain extent. There are circles in which, partly out of regard for the feelings of my friends and partly out of regard for the possible interests of my needy pocketbook, I never refer to myself as an Anarchist.

But I do not find myself shut out from membership in the Corps, and I do not see why you should. On the contrary, I should think the Corps was your natural vent. If circumstances compel you to hold your tongue in the sphere of your daily life, you must sometimes feel the pinch and long for a position where you could let yourself loose. Here you have it. No one to whom you are more than a name need ever know what you wrote. If the target is an editor, so that your letter is presumably for publication, you can send with your name a pseudonym over which you want your letter printed. The public will never know who wrote it. One of Liberty's best-known contributors, who is a member of the Corps, and sometimes signs his own name to letters in other papers than Liberty, had as target a paper in which, I suppose, he was afraid that his letter might strike the wrong eyes. So he signed a five-syllable Greek pseudonym, in setting which up the intelligent compositor made two distinct mistakes; and I am sure the writer's identity was as well veiled as if he had never written the letter. You can easily enough do the same thing. Only remember that, according to the custom of good papers, you must send your own name too, so that the editor may know who his contributor is. If you don't understand how this may be done, or if you don't know in what form to prepare copy so that an editor can use it, write to me, and I'll help you if I can.

If you are afraid to let your name and your ideas be seen together even by a target, since he might know somebody who knew you, tell me in what parts of the country you are least known, and I'll make a special arrangement to give you targets only in those parts. I'm sure that ought to be safe enough for anybody. I am the most accommodating man in the world, if only I can get you to write letters for me.

I believe that there are among Liberty's subscribers many who accept the principles it teaches, but do not, or do not fully, avow them, because of the opprobrium attached to the name of Anarchism. Their position may be reasonable or unreasonable, commendable or reprehensible; at any rate, we must accept it as a fact. I address this class, who have grown so used to thinking "We are not in the active Anarchist movement" that they have not noticed what an opportunity the A. L. W. C. opens to them. Here is a chance to take your place among workers without damage to your reputation; will you do it?

To the members of the Corps.

Friends, — Mr. Tucker said in the last number of Liberty some of the things I meant to say here. When I got Mr. Hall's postal, I felt cheap as a representative of the A. L. W. C. I felt glad that Liberty was a paper of such small circulation, so that few would know how inefficient a set we were. I thought that, if targets took more interest in our work than writers did, it was time I changed my tactics and set the targets to bombarding the marksmen. Since then I have received a letter from another Section A target, D. Webster Groh, who has found out that he was made a target on Dec. 1. In writing under date of Dec. 25 to attack Anarchism and me, he incidentally remarks that two of my corps have written to him.

When Mr. Hall was named as target, there were six names on the roll of Section A. One of these withdrew within the following fortnight, on the ground that new circumstances made it impossible for him to keep up writing; doubtless that gives his excuse for not writing to Mr. Hall. One of the others had given notice, when first sending in his name, that he could write only occasionally. One other had not written to me in person, but the name was sent in for him by a friend; possibly there may have been some misunderstanding. What was the matter with the other three I can't guess.

Perhaps the fault is all mine, for proposing a pledge with a loophole clause, "when possible," and then taking no measures to find out how broad the loophole was made. I have thought all along that the roll would need revising once a year or so, since members might die and the heirs might neglect to tell me. (Of course, I assume that no member would propose to drop his membership without letting me know.) Perhaps once a year is not often enough.

I therefore request every member of the Corps to report to me within the coming fortnight, telling whether he has written to all his targets since joining, and, if not, what proportion he thinks he has failed on. I want such a report from every one who was on my roll Dec. 1, and wishes to be kept on it. I have no objection to keeping on the roll those who sometimes fail to write, provided I know how much their discount is; but I do not think I can afford to go on, not knowing whether a man writes to nine-tenths of his targets or one-tenth. I further request every member to keep some memorandum of his letters written hereafter, so that future reports of this kind may be more easily and correctly made. I do not doubt that the present report will be more or less inaccurate, because of the absence of such memoranda; but I can at least know what you think you have been doing.

Target, Sections A and B. — The "Evening News," Indianapolis, Ind., a strong free trade paper, prints letters. Show the need of removing governmental restriction from money, or how far the principle of freedom may be made to reach.

Section C. — The "Leader," Wichita, Kan., says it advocates "free land, free money, free trade, personal freedom," and spelling reform. "Personal freedom" doubtless means opposition to prohibition of the liquor trade, "free land," probably, single tax. Tell what you think is necessary to gain any of these freedoms in its true sense, or to make freedom perfect and universal.

Stephen T. Byington.

No Magic in the Multiplication of Fools.

[Horace L. Traubel.]

It is a current philosophy that a thousand fools working in division must always remain a thousand fools, but that a thousand fools coöperating are magically transformed into a thousand-leaved volume of prophecy. It is comfortable arithmetic. But it is the sort of figuring that always winds up in ciphers.

"The garden of the laws is full of tropical plants, of unexpected flowers; and by no means its slightest charm is this subversion of the natural order, whereby appear at the end of stems and branches fruit just the opposite of that which is promised by the essence of the tree or bush. The apple-tree bears figs, and the cherry-tree medlars; violet-plants yield sweet potatoes, and hollyhocks salsify. It is delicious." — SÉVERINE.

The Beauties of Government.

☞ *The readers of Liberty are urgently invited to contribute to this department. It is open to any statement of facts which exhibit the State in any phase of its fourfold capacity of fool, meddler, knave, and tyrant. Either original accounts based upon the writer's own knowledge, or apparently reliable accounts clipped from recent publications, are welcome.*

LABOR'S SEAL ON ITS OWN SLAVERY.
[New York Sun.]

ALBANY, Dec. 17. — The first case on record of one labor organization using the conspiracy law to fight another labor organization came up in the police court here this afternoon, when representatives of the Knights of Labor applied to Justice Stephens for warrants for the arrest of certain leaders and members of the Tin, Copper, and Sheet Iron Workers' Trades Union, connected with the Federation of Labor. In almost every one of the State labor conventions held in this city of late years resolutions have been adopted denouncing the conspiracy law. Both the Knights of Labor and the Federation of Labor have denounced it, and now to have the law used by one organization to prosecute members of another places the former organization in a rather uncertain light. The case in question is one in which Edward J. Lee, the Knights of Labor leader who gained notoriety in ordering the great Central-Hudson Railroad strike several years ago, figures. He and Thomas B. Franklin, the Knight of Labor directly interested, appeared in court with counsel. Franklin complained that he had been employed at work on a large building, and that his coworkers were trades unionists and caused him to be discharged. He claims to be a victim of a conspiracy. Subpœnas were issued, and the case will be examined to see whether warrants will be issued for the arrest of the alleged conspirators.

EVER THE SAME OLD STORY.
[New York Sun.]

ST. JOSEPH, Mo., Dec. 29. — City Attorney James Mytton has made formal charges of malfeasance and bribery against the police force and the police judge. He says gambling houses run wide open all over the city, that the police visit them and watch the play, at the same time accepting drinks and cigars from the proprietors, and, when compelled to make arrests, take only the keeper, letting the players continue the game, and releasing the proprietor on his own recognizance; that the judge and captains hold star chamber sessions of the police court, admitting no one but arrested gamblers, keep the city attorney in ignorance of the trial, and impose the lowest possible fine on the gamblers without compelling them to appear. Gambling is a felony in Missouri.

[The good people will think that the wrong here consists in the non-enforcement of the law. Not so. It consists in the existence of the law, affording a cover under which blackmailers can draw pay from the people for enforcing it and at the same time exact pay from its violators for not enforcing it.]

GETTING BACK THE BLOOD MONEY.
[New York World.]

The wholesome terror in which New Yorkers hold the Lexow committee is the capital stock of a new kind of blackmailer. Some persons are threatened with accusation before the committee, while others are to get subpœnas as witnesses if they refuse to pay. Nor are the pantatas escaping. When they subscribed towards the travelling expenses of Katie Schubert and Mrs. Thurow, others who know damaging facts were inspired to ask for free transportation, or its equivalent in coin.

A police captain told a "World" reporter recently that he had been bullied and threatened by more than twenty keepers of disorderly houses. The women told him, if he refused to "give up," they would go to John W. Goff and the Lexow committee, and accuse him of receiving bribes in return for protection. The captain said the practice was becoming general, and that he had a number of fellow-sufferers.

Sometimes the demand for money was made in a begging way. The women declared that since the Lexow committee had turned New York upside down they had had to go out of business and were penniless. This was followed by a request for the restoration of some of the money they had paid for protection.

Certain lawyers in New York, practising for the most part in the criminal courts, are being pillaged by the extortionists. Former "shady" clients have asked for money, with the threat that, if it was refused, they would take the witness stand and swear that they had paid extortionate sums for defence, and that other sums were obtained from them on the pretext that the money would go to "fix" judges and court clerks. The unfortunates, believing that such a charge would injure their practices and prejudice bench and bar against them, have been bled.

One innocent man, who has a downtown office, admitted to a "World" reporter that in four weeks he had paid $300 in this way.

[In almost every work that it undertakes, — even in the exposure of its own corruption, — the State lends itself to the blackmailer.]

ONE BY ONE THE ROSES FALL.
[New York Sun.]

TRENTON, N. J., Dec. 27. — Vice-Chancellor Green today filed a decision that will be of interest to trades organizations. It is in the application of Thomas C. Barr, late proprietor of the Newark "Times," seeking an injunction restraining the Essex Trades Council from carrying on a boycott against his paper.

A permanent injunction is granted without costs. It restrains the Essex Trades Council, which is composed of representatives of different trade organizations, from distributing or circulating any circulars, printed resolutions, or other publications containing appeals or threats against the "Times" with the design of interfering with its business, and from making threats or using intimidation toward the dealers or advertisers in the paper tending to cause a withdrawal of their patronage.

The Newark "Times" suspended publication a few weeks ago. Its death was caused in part by the action of the Trades Council, acting in conjunction with Newark's Typographical Union, which attempted to prevent Mr. Barr from using plate matter in his newspaper. Mr. Barr persisting, the union printers quit work and non-union men were employed.

The Trades Council took up the fight for the union, urged its members to boycott the paper, and attempted to dissuade business men from advertising in it.

[The boycott follows the strike to the limbo of lost liberties. Under this decision the Catholic Church can be enjoined from promulgating its Index, and the capitalistic press must quit advising the people not to read Anarchistic literature.]

THE RED MAN RIPE FOR GOVERNMENT.
[New York Sun.]

WASHINGTON, Dec. 15. — The Dawes Indian Commission was before the House Committee on Indian Affairs today, and ex-Senator Dawes entertained those present for over an hour with a most interesting account of the condition existing among the five civilized tribes in Indian Territory. Mr. Dawes urged the necessity of a change in government, and favored, as has already been told in his report to the Secretary of the Interior, abolishment of tribal relations and the establishment of a Territorial form of government. Many of the Creek Indians are immensely wealthy. Senator Dawes was the guest of one of these.

"Why," said Mr. Dawes, "he owns the United States Court House and rents it to this government; he owns the house the judge lives in, and rents it to him; he himself lives in a much finer house than I do; he owns a large stud of Kentucky thoroughbreds, and took me out driving behind as fine a pair of these animals as can be found in the country. During our drive I asked him what he thought about the colored people down there.

"'Why,' said he, 'the colored people are pretty good people; one of them is our supreme judge, and he is a good, honest judge, too. But I don't like him as well personally as I used to, because he didn't keep a contract with me once.'

"I questioned him further about this breach of faith, and this was the story:

"'The judge agreed with me,' said this wealthy Indian, 'in return for my influence in getting him on the bench, to give me one-half of the fees. He did this until a case came along in which the fees were $2,700, and then he went back on his contract.'

"'I thought you said he was honest?' I objected.

"'Oh, so he is,' was this noble Indian's reply; 'but that's the way we do business down here.'"

Mr. Dawes also told a story of a lawyer who had a case in one of these Indian courts who received a note from the judge offering to decide the case in his favor for $400; also a note from the foreman of the jury, who offered to give him a verdict for $40. He had such a good case that he paid no attention to the note. The other man won the case.

Mr. Dawes said he could multiply by the hour such instances as these which had come to his knowledge while in the Territory, and believed no better arguments were needed for the action he and his fellow Commissioners had recommended on the bill creating the new Territory of Indianola.

[Not all the braves are in Tammany's wigwam. Justice Paddy Divver himself could give no points to these Creek magistrates. And yet we are told that the Indian does not assimilate. Yes, by all means give him a government; he has shown his capacity to administer one of the latest style, having all the modern improvements.]

PARISIANS GAGGED WITH RED TAPE.
[Newcastle Chronicle.]

The State Telephone Department in Paris should open the eyes of those who are constantly clamoring for handing everything and everybody to the paternal care of governments. The Parisians cannot get any satisfaction out of their State-controlled and managed telephones. Numerous applicants have of late been refused a supply of telephone communication because the Department happens to have exhausted the credit granted for the establishment of new lines, and cannot accommodate their new customers until the Chamber finds leisure to vote a fresh credit for the development of the undertaking. A private company would have found the money long ago, and brought things to a brisk conclusion.

[It is good government gospel that wires must be pulled before they are strung.]

FUTILE SUMPTUARY LAWS.

To the Editor of Liberty:

Concerning the liquor law in Scotland, I would point out that it is a frequent sight to see policemen bringing a man into a hotel in order to see if he is a *bona fide* guest, on which occasion, it is said, the policeman avails himself of the privileges of *bona fide* patrons.

In Ireland no one can patronize the railroad bars on Sundays unless it appears that he is a *bona fide* traveller. A ticket must be shown at the door, — policemen standing about to watch the farce. I saw twelve thirsty souls make use, one after another, of a single two-penny ticket (which one of them had purchased for the purpose) to quench the feelings left by a Saturday's outing. Of course, punching the ticket would make this impossible, but what company would thus drive away business?

A London police official, speaking lately of the massage-house abuses of that city, said: "My opinion is that *law is not strong enough*, and that these places can be closed only by exposure in the press."

LAW AND ORDER.

HOW THE STATE PROTECTS PROPERTY.
[Newcastle Chronicle.]

An extraordinary piece of news is telegraphed from Athens. It is to the effect that, in order to increase the price of currants, whose value has lately declined

considerably, the Greek chamber has voted the detention and destruction of this year's crop! This is reaction of the output with a vengeance. The Greeks are evidently admirers of the new political economy, whose fundamental principles appear to be that half a loaf is worse than no bread, and that the less there is produced the more there will be to divide. And this incredible step, exceeding in folly any of the deeds of the wise men of Gotham, is to be taken in a country which is bankrupt, and which is suffering severely from the late destructive earthquakes. We have spoken of the Greeks; but, indeed, we ought to have said part of the Greeks, for the decision was arrived at by a small majority, — 74 to 69. As the minority, representing the currant growers of Corinth and elsewhere, will certainly not submit to have the experiment tried on their vile bodies, serious trouble, culminating possibly in civil war, seems inevitable.

[In this country, when the crops are good, the party in power claims the credit. A good crop in Greece seems to be a reason for "turning the rascals out." The writing of a thanksgiving proclamation would evidently be an awkward job for the king of Greece.]

PAPIER MACHÉ INSTEAD OF OAK.
[New York Sun.]

ALBANY, Dec. 18. — If the papier maché ceiling in the Assembly chamber is not repaired or replaced by another, it will fall down upon the heads of the assemblymen while they are preparing the statutes of '95. The ceiling is almost as full of holes as a sieve. There was no wood backing placed behind it, and the substance has sunk in some places and spread apart in others. The papier maché which was put in the ceiling instead of oak has proved to be of poor quality.

The ceiling is composed of papier maché moulds, three feet square, resting on quartered oak and iron girders. Many of the panels have holes in them, one of them being large enough to admit of the passage of a man's body. The fibre in some of the moulds appears to be rotting away and the papier maché to be gradually crumbling. As viewed from the dark garret above, daylight may be seen through the ceiling, in a hundred places, in the chamber below. The speaker's desk is plainly visible through one panel. Everywhere daylight could be seen through the substance, which is in a worse condition than is generally supposed.

The door leading up to the garret over the ceiling, which has always been open to the public, has been kept locked for some months, and the private stairway leading thereto from the assembly clerk's room has been boarded up. One of the reasons given for this is that, should any one step off the narrow walk over the ceiling on to the papier maché, it would mean instant death, as the ceiling is unable to sustain the least weight.

Capitol Commissioner Perry refuses to talk about the condition of the ceiling. The fraud against the State was exposed in 1889. The ceiling was constructed in 1888. The legislature of that year ordered it, and the assembly passed a resolution appointing a commission to attend to the preliminaries for the new structure. Charles B. Andrews was the superintendent of public buildings, and had the letting of the contract for the new ceiling. He advertised and got these bids: Hughes Bros., Syracuse, $283,435; Hilton Bridge Company, $274,500; John Snaith, $270,150; Crawford & Valentine, $278,562; Sullivan & Ehlers, $273,566.20; John H. Mooney, $286 840. The contract was let to Mr. Snaith.

The specifications stated that none but first-class mechanics and workmen should be employed, that the work should be done in accordance with the several drawings furnished by Charles B. Andrews, and that work not well done should be rejected by the superintendent, and must be replaced by the contractor at his own cost. The specifications required that the ceiling should be constructed of first-class kiln-dried quartered white oak, wrought out and finished in accordance with the several drawings, and that it should be done in an artistic and spirited manner by first-rate carvers who fully understood the *motif* and extent of the design.

The assembly, after the *exposé*, appointed a committee to investigate. This committee whitewashed the job. The assembly was not satisfied with this, and appointed what was known as the Fish committee. This committee, after taking testimony, denounced the fraud and called the attention of the district attorney of Albany county to it. The assembly adopted the Fish committee's report, without censuring the comptroller, as the report did. The report said:

"The work is unfinished in its details. Wooden beams have been placed where iron beams were called for by the contract, papier maché in the spandrels in place of oak, and the pilasters have been improperly finished, all being done in a negligent, careless, and cheap manner, while the appropriation allowed by the State was more than sufficient to have made a perfectly finished piece of work. Andrews, Sullivan, and Snaith combined to defraud the people."

The Fish committee's report was only too true. The legislature of 1895 will have the construction of another ceiling to look after.

[My good Single-Tax friends, how much better off will you and the rest of us be when economic rent is turned over to contractors in exchange for papier maché than now when it is left in the hands of the landlords?]

"A SOFT THING IN THEM BUGS."
[New York Sun.]

The annual meeting of the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture began in Newburyport last Tuesday. In behalf of the Gypsy Moth Commission the secretary of that body reported that the moth occupies now only that portion of the commonwealth between Lexington and the sea. The commission asks for an appropriation of $200,000 with which to carry on the work of redeeming moth-eaten Boston and the adjacent territory, and the Board of Agriculture recommends that the appropriation be made.

In one of the suburbs of Boston a few days ago a visitor saw a detachment of the moth-exterminators at work, and asked a policeman if he thought they were making much headway.

"Why the hell should they?" said the policeman. "They have a soft thing in them bugs."

[The State thrives on evil and plague, as the doctors thrive on disease.]

AN EXCUSE FOR A JUNKET.
[Newcastle Chronicle.]

In their hankering after interference with systems which work quite satisfactorily at present, the London County Council are about to waste more of the rate-payers' money. They have agreed to expend the sum of one hundred pounds for an inquiry into the "Mont de Piété" method of pawnbroking in France. This outlay is utterly unwarrantable. The "Mont de Piété" is regulated by the French code, explanatory books relating to which can be obtained for a few shillings. For a few shillings also can be obtained books giving the whole history of the "Mont de Piété" established last century, and explaining its working as modified by subsequent laws. Moreover, any official connected with the "Mont de Piété" establishments would be glad to commit to paper, for a small sum, all that his knowledge and experience could suggest on the subject of pawnbroking in France. The sum of one hundred pounds means a commission to somebody protected by the London County Council, or possibly to some of its members, to go and take a pleasant trip to Paris in order to obtain information which can be got at an outlay of under five pounds.

[If these London commissioners are like our American city fathers, they will come back from Paris knowing as much about the "Mont de Piété" as the young ladies at the Moulin Rouge could tell them.]

ARCHISTIC ART.
[Newcastle Chronicle.]

Opinions differ as to the architectural merit of the great building in which the German Reichstag will henceforth hold its sittings, and which the Emperor Wilhelm formally opened. That plain-spoken monarch, who, in Sheridan's phrase, is "nothing if not critical," is said to have dubbed the huge pile "a monument of bad taste." Certainly the alleged artistic failure cannot be attributed to any lack either of deliberation or expense. The question was raised in 1871, immediately after the first Reichstag met; the government were thirteen years in making up their minds as to where, when, and how it should be erected; the foundation stone was laid by the old Emperor William, ten years ago; and the entire cost of the structure has been £1,500,000! The fact is that the German, like every other parliament, is ready to revise creation in all its details, and the architects' plans have been so cut up and patched into new designs that any fine unity of aspect became an impossibility. The Reichshaus as now completed is a great oblong structure 450 feet broad, 350 feet deep, and 80 feet high. At the corners four great towers rise to the height of 130 feet, and are said to form the most imposing features of the whole. The architect intended the Reichshaus to be dominated by a "vast and wondrous dome" of glass over the central chamber, but he was not allowed to build the chamber in the centre, and has had to substitute an artificial cupola of glass and gilt iron, which the irreverent Berliners have already labelled the "monkey cage." The four sides are said to be punctured all over with so many windows that these more than anything else mar the impressiveness of the building.

[It is fitting that professional meddlers should live in a house that exemplifies the evil of meddling.]

ANARCHISTS POOR WAR MATERIAL.
[New York Sun.]

BERLIN, Dec. 15. — The "Vorwärts" has again shown its ability to get official documents which are marked "confidential." It has made public the full text of a letter issued from the war office to regulate the acceptance of the one-year volunteers. The officers concerned are instructed that Social Democrats and Anarchists must be debarred from the short service.

[Relief from the burden of military service is, in itself, the opposite of oppression, but the obvious motive of the relief reveals the tyrannical purposes for which armies are maintained.]

THEY APPRECIATE AN OPEN MARKET.
[Syndicate Matter.]

Boston letter carriers are somewhat pleased at the outcome of their opposition to the rule of the postal authorities requiring the men to purchase their uniforms and accessories from the tailoring firm to which a contract was awarded. The men all along felt that they could have outfits cheaper, if permitted an option in the selection of a dealer. Accordingly the matter was brought to the attention of the authorities at Washington, and it has been decided that the carriers may buy of any tailor they desire.

BOSTON POLICE WON'T TAKE BACK-TALK.
[New York Sun.]

BOSTON, Dec. 5. — The police today arrested a negro who was parading the streets with a large placard on his back bearing this:

"Girls Cannot Be Angels on $3 a Week."

It was discovered later that he was in the employ of Charlotte Smith, the Social Purity reformer. On hearing of his arrest Miss Smith secured his release. She promised not to send out any more men without procuring a permit for them to parade.

THE LAW AS A TOOL OF THE TRICKSTER.
[New York Sun.]

It was provided in a contract between a Cincinnati theatre and comic opera company that, if the weekly receipts fell below $3,000, the deficit should be made good by the travelling manager; but he failed to do so, and was sued. The case was dismissed by the judge because the agreement covered Sunday performances, which are forbidden by Ohio law.

PROFITS OF OFFICE-HOLDING IN INDIANA.
[New York Sun.]

INDIANAPOLIS, Nov. 22. — A. G. Smith, the retiring Attorney-General of the State, submitted to the Governor yesterday a report on the remuneration of the officers under the new fee and salary law. It appears that in the last two years, in addition to his salary of $2,500, he has had in fees $62,549.11.

Tabulate the Beauties.

The London "Times" of November 24 printed the following letter from Herbert Spencer:

The attention which has been drawn to Mr. Ilbert's proposal for a record of comparative legislation suggests to me the propriety of naming a project akin to it, towards the execution of which a small step has been made.

The project I referred to was originally conceived as a kind of supplement to the "Descriptive Sociology" (or rather to one division of it), and might eventually have been entered upon had not the heavy losses year by year entailed on me by that compilation obliged me to discontinue it. The end in view was to present briefly, in a tabulated form, the contents of our statute-book from early days onwards, showing why each law was enacted, the effects produced, the duration, and, if repealed, the reasons for the repeal; the general purpose being that of making easily accessible the past experience useful for present guidance. The scheme in its developed form included like tabulations of the laws of other nations, which, while making comparisons possible, would enable us to profit by other legislative experiments than those of our ancestors. There was, however, no thought of dealing in like manner with the legislation of the English-speaking races at large.

In 1887 a tentative step was taken towards execution of this scheme. There existed at that time a weekly publication entitled "Jus," established and edited by Mr. Wordsworth Donisthorpe, and partly devoted to the exposure of mischievous law-making. In pursuance of a suggestion which he says I made to him in 1873, he commenced giving instalments of such a digest as that described above; and these instalments were continued from September, 1887, to March, 1888, when the death of the periodical brought them to a close.

A further step was subsequently taken. Between two and three years ago I named the project to a philanthropic millionaire, and the interest he displayed in it led me to think that he would furnish funds for carrying it out. That he might be able to decide, however, it was needful that a finished portion of such a digest should be produced, and, in consultation with Mr. Donisthorpe, a final form of table was agreed upon. Prompted by the expectation raised, Mr. Donisthorpe enlisted in the cause Mr. J. C. Spence, by whose labors, aided by his own, a table was duly prepared, put in type, and printed. As is shown by the enclosed copy of this printed table, its parallel columns, severally filled up, are headed: "Reasons for the Enactment"; "Provisions of Enactment"; "Date and Title"; "Effects"; "Repeal." The period dealt with extended from 1328 to 1349; and the table showed that nearly all the laws passed have been repealed.

To complete the conception of the scheme it should be added that along with the whole series of tables, thus sampled, there was to be a subject-index, so classified into divisions and sub-divisions of matters dealt with by law that by reference to any particular division or sub-division, and then to the pages named as containing the laws relating to it, it would be possible in a few minutes to learn what had been attempted in successive centuries in respect of any particular matter and with what results.

Unfortunately, however, when this sample table was put before my millionaire friend, he expressed the opinion that he could devote his surplus revenues to purposes of more importance. The project thus dropped, and nothing further has since been done.

I am fully conscious that no such compilation could be made complete. Doubtless numerous acts dealing with trivial matters would have to be omitted to prevent undue voluminousness; and it is certain that in many cases the effects produced by acts could not be specified and the reasons for their repeal could not be definitely stated; though in these cases the mere fact of repeal would often have sufficient significance. But it is not, therefore, to be concluded that an undertaking of this kind, imperfectly executed though it might be, should not be carried out as far as possible. It is true that politicians and legislators who plume themselves on being "practical," and whose facts are furnished by Blue-books and Parliamentary Debates, would probably pay but small respect to these groups of facts furnished by the legislative experiments of our forefathers. Experiences of the day satisfy them. But those who take wider views and see that generalizations drawn from the entire past life of a nation are more to be trusted than these superficial generalizations, and that it is folly to make laws without inquiring what have been the results of essentially similar laws long ago passed and long ago abandoned, will see that such a work, containing easily accessible information, might have considerable effect in preventing some of the legislative blunders which are daily made.

It is more for the purpose of putting this project on record than with the hope that it may be executed in our day that I write this letter. The ambitions which now prevail among the wealthy, and in fulfilment of which they spend large sums, may hereafter be replaced by ambitions of a higher kind, and then the needful funds may be forthcoming.

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